YCS Update of COVID-19 Response

The unprecedented reality of the Coronavirus Pandemic, COVID-19, continues to rapidly evolve, affecting the daily lives of everyone. The impact of this health crisis has served to function as a reminder of the intricate and important connections involved in our daily lives. For over 100 years, YCS has been committed to providing behavioral and mental health services and support to vulnerable children and families throughout the state of New Jersey. These uncertain times are no different.

At YCS, we are working around the clock to protect the health and well-being of the children and families who depend upon us for services. These children and young adults have complex mental health challenges, some of which include autism and other developmental disabilities. For them, the ability to cope with the COVID-19 crisis is even more daunting. Further, many of the children in our residential facilities do not have families to whom they can go home to for comfort. Our courageous committed staff is here for them – providing constant reassurance and the stability they need to fully live each day with less fear, as they shelter in place.

I would like to take this opportunity to assure you that we at YCS are taking the COVID-19 health crisis very seriously and are committed to keeping all individuals as safe as possible. I want to assure you that all of our programs will continue to operate throughout this uncertain time in history. We have been monitoring local, state, and CDC guidelines very closely and are adjusting our services to comply with recommended safety guidelines - some of which are changing moment to moment.

To ensure the safety of our staff as well as the youth and their families we serve, we have implemented, over the last two weeks and forward, the following steps to optimize our services while minimizing risk to participants and staff at risk.

· We began practicing the CDC recommended social distancing by conducting conferences and large meetings utilizing alternative communication platforms.

· We made the decision to close all our sites to visitors, volunteers and mentors - this includes group homes, community-based services and administrative offices. For the children and young adults in our group homes, we acknowledge the importance of family support and are encouraging them to keep in contact with their loved ones by phone or other technologies.

· We have worked swiftly to ensure that our prescribers be effectively equipped to provide tele-psychiatry services

· We have provided a Telehealth platform, Zoom, available for all of our visiting nurses.

· Our YCS schools will be providing daily home instruction.

· We have set up three (3) emergency location sites should the need arise for quarantining purposes.

· The residences’, following CDC recommendations, are being thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily. Staff and residents are mindfully practicing the CDC recommended guidelines to frequently and thoroughly wash hands, along with keeping a 6-foot distance between individuals.
· We have taken stock of all the residences’ needs for provisions, including water, food, medications, and cleaning products. These items have been ordered and will be continually monitored to ensure that there will be sufficient supplies providing to our homes as long as necessary.

· We continue to offer virtual Meet and Greet visits for individuals interested in our programs.

· Admissions will continue to be received into our programs, once an individual is medically cleared for admission.

· Our HR Department is actively recruiting and hiring new employees. Please visit our website to view employment opportunities and apply.

· All non-essential, administrative employees have begun working from home to adhere to social distancing recommendations and state recommendations.

· For our employees, we are offering Telehealth services and waiving all member co-pays for our staff. We are waiving all payment responsibility for testing related to COVID-19 as instructed by their medical provider.

· We are monitoring the health of all our front-line staff at the residences before they begin their shifts and we are encouraging any staff that is sick to stay at home.

YCS will continue to diligently monitor the recommendations of local, state and CDC officials. As we learn more, we will continue to work diligently to adhere to public health directives and keep you informed.

Since 1918, YCS has been committed to providing behavioral and mental health services to New Jersey’s most vulnerable children and families. It is our top priority to continue to provide these services and support our clients through this challenging time. While we are all working hard to ensure the health and safety or our youth, we could not be nearly as successful without the support of our amazing staff. These dedicated individuals are coming to work every day and making countless sacrifices to ensure the well-being of the youth in our programs. As we continue to work together, I am confident that through the dedication of our staff and overall commitment as an agency, we will persevere in our commitment helping individuals find hope and cultivate strength and resilience for a brighter future.

On behalf of the YCS Family and 1,200 individuals we serve, I thank you for your continued support and offer my sincerest wishes for the safety and well being of you and your families.

Sincerely,

Tara Augustine
President and CEO